

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2020

The Honorable David Pekoske
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 20598-6001

Dear Administrator Pekoske:

We write regarding reports that, as of April 13, 2020, a tenth Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officer at Orlando International Airport (MCO) has tested positive for COVID-19. Reports indicate that the most recent TSA officer to become ill was assigned to the West Side Security Checkpoint and last worked at MCO on March 23, 2020. Although we cannot definitively say where transmission took place, we are concerned that TSA's efforts to safeguard the health of its MCO-based officers have been insufficient to date. TSA officers are deeply-valued members of our community, with families of their own, and they deserve to be protected. In the recently enacted *CARES Act*, Congress made available hundreds of millions of dollars for TSA to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for its officers and to clean and sanitize checkpoints and other airport common areas. In addition to using this funding at MCO, we urge you to take other measures to ensure the safety of TSA officers and the traveling public.

To date, TSA officers are authorized, but not required, to use masks and respirators to protect themselves and prevent the spread of the virus. Although we understand PPE is in short supply, we respectfully ask you to update protocol to require that TSA officers use masks when working at checkpoints, especially at large hub airports that move passengers traveling from COVID-19 epicenters. Furthermore, the most recent CDC guidance recommends that individuals "wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain." We urge TSA to take all reasonable steps to increase public awareness and adoption of the updated CDC guidelines, both on its website and in signage and announcements at airports. These actions will make our airports and aviation workforce safer during the COVID-19 crisis.

Furthermore, we request clarification from TSA on the following issues:

1. What are TSA's guidelines for protecting frontline employees—such as Transportation Security Officers and Federal Air Marshals—during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What actions are being taken by TSA to protect employees with underlying health conditions from COVID-19?
3. What are the TSA's procedures once it has been notified that a member of its workforce has tested positive for COVID-19?
4. Does TSA have N95 or other masks in storage? If so, does TSA have any plans to distribute these masks to frontline employees or otherwise utilize them to fight the pandemic? Specifically, what is the status of PPE supplies available to MCO's TSA workforce?
5. Does TSA plan to submit a request for hazard pay for its employees to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB)?

6. TSA's website currently does not reflect the ten TSA officers from MCO who have contracted COVID-19. Does TSA intend to update its website with more frequency?
7. What additional authorities or resources, if any, does TSA need from Congress to better protect its officers and the traveling public?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and stand ready to assist in any way necessary.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Val B. Demings
Member of Congress